

The One Creator God
STPH 3095
Fall, 2016
Thur 12:40PM-3:30PM, DSPT 2
Office: DSPT (2301 Vine Street, Faculty Bldg, Nr. 201)
Office hours: 3:30-4:30 Mondays or by appointment

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Course description: *Classical and contemporary questions regarding the nature of God and creation will be addressed through the retrieval of the tradition of Thomas Aquinas. Existence and attributes of God, divine compassion and human suffering, the possibility and nature of God-talk, divine action and contemporary science, cosmology and creation.*

Goals: *Students will acquire a fundamental understanding of what it means to speak of God, using Dionysius's three ways of causality, negation and eminence, and Aquinas's notion of analogy. They will discover the possibility and meaning of "proofs" for the existence of God and come to understand certain basic problematics regarding divine attributes, knowledge, will and action.*

Outcomes: *Students will be conversant with the notion of analogy in the thought of Thomas Aquinas and be able to apply it to contemporary issues in God-talk. They will be able to analyze and critique arguments for and against the existence of God. They will be able to discuss certain key issues regarding God's being and relation to the world including: (a) the meaning of divine attributes, (b) the understanding of divine knowledge and will in relation to creaturely contingency and freedom; and (c) the possibility of divine action in the world as the world is understood by empirical science. They will also be capable of serious academic research regarding the subject matter of this course.*

- Sep.8 Existence of God (Causality in Aquinas and contemporary science)
Required: Anselm, Proslogian; Reply, in Hick, *Existence*, p.25-30.
Required: ST I, Q.2, aa.1-3. (Esp., first, second, and third "ways")
Optional: Hankey, "The Place of the Proof of God's Existence in the Summa Theologiae"
Optional: Wallace, "Aquinas and Newton on the Causality of Nature and of God"
Optional: Gilby, Appendix 1; Appendixes 4-7. [located at the top of the Moodle page]
- Sep.15 Existence of God (Contingency and design in Aquinas and contemporary science)
ST I, Q.2, a.3, (Esp. fourth and fifth "ways")
Gilby, Appendixes 8-10.
DiNoia, "Philosophical Theology"
George, "On the Occasion of Darwin's Bicentennial: Finally Time to Retire the Fifth Way?"
Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, pp. 14-46.
Maritain, *Approaches to God*, 1-15
- Sep.22 NO CLASS
- Sep.29 Atheism
Flew, "Theology and Falsification" in Hick, *Existence of God*, p.224-228
Lash, "Where Does *The God Delusion* Come From?"
Hyman, "Atheism in Modern History"
Schall, "Thomism and Atheism"
Turner, "On Denying the Right God: Aquinas on Atheism and Idolatry"
- Oct. 6 Divine simplicity, perfection, and goodness
ST I, Q.3, prologue and a.1-4, 7-8; Q.4, 1-3; Q.6, 1
Gilby, Appendixes 12-13.
Knasas, "Aquinas and Finite Gods"
- Oct. 13 NO CLASS

- Oct 20 Divine infinity, presence, immutability, and eternity
 ST I, Q.7, 1; Q.8, 1, 3; Q.9, 1-2; Q.10, 1-3
 Gilby, Appendixes 14-16.
 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p.342-351.
 Dodds, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Motion of the Motionless God"
 PAPER TOPIC DUE.
- Oct.27 READING WEEK (No class meeting)
- Nov.3 Knowing and speaking of God
 ST I, Q. 12, 1, 5-6, 12-13; Q.13, 1-3, 5-7.
 Dodds, "Ultimacy and Intimacy"
 McWhorter, "Aquinas on God's Relation to the World"
 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
- Nov. 10 Divine knowledge
 ST I, Q.14, 1-5, 8, 10, 13, 15.
 Placher, *Domestication of Transcendence*, p. 1-107
- Nov.17 Divine will and power
 ST I, Q. 19, 1-10; ST Q.25, 1-3, 5-6.
 Wright, "Divine Knowledge and Human Freedom"
 OUTLINE DUE.
- Nov.24 THANKSGIVING DAY (no class)
- Dec.1 NO CLASS
- Dec.8 Divine compassion, creation and cosmology
 ST I, Q.20, 1-2, Q.21, 1, 3-4, Q.22, 1-4; Q.44, 1, 4; Q.45, 1-3, 5; Q.46, 1-2
 Hill, "Two Gods of Love"
 John Paul II, "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering"
 Dodds, "Thomas Aquinas, Human Suffering, and the Unchanging God of Love"
 Stoeger, "The Origin of the Universe in Science and Religion"
 Placher, *Domestication*, p.111-27, 128-45.
- Dec.15 Divine providence & action
 ST Q.103, 1, 5-7; Q.104, 1-2; Q.105, 5-6.
 Placher, *Domestication*, p.181-200.
 Dodds, Unlocking Divine Causality
 Barnes, "Natural Final Causality and Providence in Aquinas"
 RESEARCH PAPER DUE

ASSIGNED READINGS:

One book is required: William Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, ISBN: 978-0664256357) (available through DSPT Amazon.com. \$22.50).

All of the readings from Aquinas are in the *Summa Theologica* (ST). There are copies of this in the GTU Library. It is also available online: <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/index.html>. There is also a link on Moodle.

The other readings are on Moodle. The password for the class is "Aquinas".

STRUCTURE:

The structure of the class is lecture/discussion. Active participation is expected, and this presupposes a careful reading of the assigned texts.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS:

To help focus the class in reading the texts, I will give a few questions for each class which deal with the weekly reading assignment. These assignments not be graded as such, but their absence will have a negative effect on your

grade. You should write a brief (50-70 word) response to each question. The response is not meant to be exhaustive, but only to indicate a few principles or points that would be involved in answering the question. Alternatively, you may be asked to formulate one or two questions of your own regarding a certain text. Your responses should be turned in each week on Moodle by date of the class meeting for which they are assigned.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

A particular focus of this course is the development of research ability regarding the subject matter of the course. To this end, particular evidence of research skills will be required:

Paper topic: Students are to turn in an initial paper topic on **October 20**. This will include simply a tentative title and a few sentences of description. It is recognized that the title and shape of the paper may change according to the student's research during the semester. Students interested in topics to be covered in class only later in the semester will have to do their own research and reading in advance to meet this deadline.

Annotated bibliography: In preparation for the final paper, students are expected to turn in an annotated bibliography of 15-20 books and/or journal articles on **November 3**. Each entry in the bibliography should be accompanied by a brief comment explaining the content of the book/article and how it will be more (or less) useful in researching the paper topic. Evidence of use of theological journals, relevant books, and on-line research tools is expected. Be sure to put the tentative title of your paper at the beginning of your annotated bibliography. Entries should be listed in proper form. (See Turabian, below.)

Outline: A detailed outline of the paper will be due on **November 17**.

Research paper: A 15-20 page research paper, in proper form, will be due on **December 15**. Kate Turabian, *A Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, is the standard regarding the form of term papers at GTU. DSPT MA students may use this paper for their "Research Paper Review." by submitting the proper form with the paper.

GRADES

Grades are based on the quality of student work, demonstrating both clearness of expression and mastery of essential concepts, and evidence of research skills. Work is also evaluated in terms of the institutional goals of the school. For these, see page 1 of the DSPT Student Handbook [http://www.dspt.edu/files/Student_Handbook.pdf].

The grade will take into consideration class participation and weekly assignments (20%), the bibliography (20%), the outline (20%), and the final paper (40%).

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